

REMARKS

Claims 15, 20, 21, 22 and 28 are rejected, under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b), as being anticipated by Haut et al. '432 (U.S. Patent No. 5,810,432); claim 15 is rejected, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as being unpatentable over Vandas et al. '787 (U.S. Patent No. 2,670,787) in view of Hilger et al. '805 (5,927,805); claims 15-17 are rejected, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as being unpatentable over Trethaway '162 (U.S. Patent No. 3,632,162) in view of Hilger et al. '805 (U.S. Patent No. 5,927,805) and Huebener '560 (U.S. Patent No. 2,647,560); claims 18 and 19 are rejected, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as being unpatentable over Trethaway '162 in view of Hilger et al. '805 and Heubener '560 and further in view of Danko '182 (U.S. Patent No. 4,210,182); claims 25 and 26 are rejected, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as being unpatentable over Haut '432 in view of Baer '180 (U.S. Patent No. 4,946,180); and claims 29 and 30 are rejected, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as being unpatentable over Haut '432 in view of Baer '180 (U.S. Patent No. 4,946,180). The Applicant acknowledges and respectfully traverses all of the raised obviousness rejections in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

In response, the Applicant thanks the Examiner for indicating that claims 23, 24 and 27 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claim(s). In accordance with this indication, the claims 23 and 27 are both appropriately revised and rewritten as independent claims 23 and 27, respectively. Both of those new independent claims are now believed to be allowable. As claims 16-19, 21, 22 and 24 each depend, either directly or indirectly, from independent claim 23, and as claim 28 depends from independent claim 27, each one of those dependent claims is also believed to be allowable.

In view of the above claim amendments and claim cancellations, the Applicant respectfully submits that further comments concerning the applied prior art of Haut et al. '432, Vandas et al. '787, Hilger et al. '805, Trethaway '162, Huebener '560, Danko '182 and/or Baer '180 is not believed necessary. The Applicant also notes the remaining prior art cited in the official action. ~~As none of that additional art is applied by the Examiner against the claims of~~ this application, the Applicant is not providing any comments concerning that art as well.

If any further amendment to this application is believed necessary to advance prosecution and place this case in allowable form, the Examiner is courteously solicited to contact the undersigned representative of the Applicant to discuss the same.

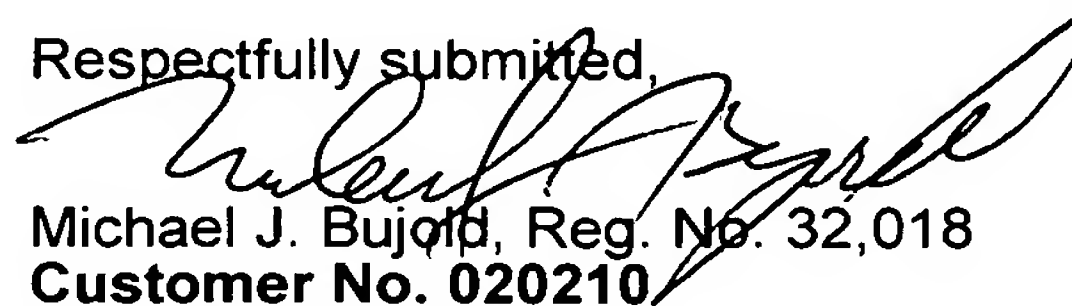
In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that all of the raised rejection(s) should be withdrawn at this time. If the Examiner disagrees with the Applicant's view concerning the withdrawal of the outstanding rejection(s) or applicability of the Haut et al. '432, Vandas et al. '787, Hilger et al. '805, Trethaway '162, Huebener '560, Danko '182 and/or Baer '180 references, the Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to indicate the specific passage or passages, or the drawing or drawings, which contain the necessary teaching, suggestion and/or disclosure required by case law. As such teaching, suggestion and/or disclosure is not present in the applied references, the raised rejection should be withdrawn at this time. Alternatively, if the Examiner is relying on his/her expertise in this field, the Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to enter an affidavit substantiating the Examiner's position so that suitable contradictory evidence can be entered in this case by the Applicant.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the raised rejection(s) should be withdrawn and this application is now placed in a condition for allowance. Action to that end, in the form of an early Notice of Allowance, is courteously solicited by the Applicant at this time.

The Applicant respectfully requests that any outstanding objection(s) or requirement(s), as to the form of this application, be held in abeyance until allowable subject matter is indicated for this case.

In the event that there are any fee deficiencies or additional fees are payable, please charge the same or credit any overpayment to our Deposit Account (Account No. 04-0213).

Respectfully submitted,



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